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PROCEEDINGS
OF
THE STATISTICAL SOCIETY OF LONDON.

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December 21, 1835.

Colonel SYKES, F.R.S., Vice-President, in the Chair.

J. More Robertson, Esq., of Lincoln's Inn ; Thomson Hankey, Jun. Esq., of South-Audley-Street ; and Robert Starling, Esq., of Islington ; were elected Fellows of this Society.

The following Paper was read :—

“ On the connection between Crime and Ignorance, as exhibited in Criminal Calendars.” By G. R. Porter, Esq.

After premising that the labours of the Statistical Society must necessarily be, in a great measure, limited to the collecting of facts which may form the groundwork for investigations concerning the various and complicated circumstances which influence the happiness and progress of social existence, and that, owing to the variety and complexity of such investigations, it must in general be unavoidable on the part of those who so employ themselves in the collection of facts, to leave their examination and their application to others — the Author observed that occasions will sometimes arise when it may be permitted to the Members of the Statistical Society to offer the result of investigations whereby they may have detected fallacies, and especially those which have

been suggested, and are apparently supported by inquiries more strictly coming within the limits of statistical labours.

Considering, therefore, that if this departure from the more ordinary course be ever allowable, it must assuredly be so in cases connected with the moral and intellectual progress of the human race, he thought it unnecessary to offer any apology for laying before the Society a few brief remarks upon some statements which have been made respecting the connection between Crime and Ignorance as exhibited in Criminal Calendars.

Having directed the attention of the Society to a paper read at its last ordinary meeting, wherein, notice being incidentally taken of this subject, the opinion, "that instruction does not tend to diminish the number of criminal offenders, but the contrary," was adopted; Mr. Porter adverted more especially to the "Essay on the Moral Statistics of France," by M. Guerry, a work of considerable merit, in which this opinion, so startling to the sanguine promoters of general education among the people, had before been brought forward, and supported by an appeal to figures, given on the authority of the Minister of Justice in France.

Disclaiming the intention to question the truth of those figures in the slightest particular, or to express any doubt as to the correctness of the deductions made from them, but, on the contrary, admitting the fact that in the departments of France, where the greatest degree of instruction is imparted to the young, there the number of criminals was the greatest in proportion to the population at the precise period to which the figures adopted by M. Guerry relate;—the Author could not but consider it as much to be regretted that in the examination of a fact so important to the moral progress of our race, M. Guerry should have contented himself with analysing the returns of a single year, when records of a similar description, applying to a longer period of time, were equally open to him. It will be shown that by thus limiting his inquiries, M. Guerry arrives at a conclusion at variance with the fact as exhibited in returns which embrace a longer period, and it might perhaps be sufficient for the establishing of this position, if reference were

made to the documents whence the result, as here stated, has been drawn; but as in the course of the investigation of those papers, some other facts, bearing upon this interesting question were elicited, the Author considered it advisable to state them.

It would have been a laborious and useless task to have gone into an examination of M. Guerry's position with respect to each of the 86 departments into which France is divided, and therefore the Author confined such examination to a limited number of departments, occupying opposite ends in the scale of instruction, thinking that thus every practical purpose would be equally well answered. It so happens that the inhabitants of the four most instructed, and of the four least instructed, departments in France are nearly the same in point of numbers, the difference being only 8,174 in a population of more than eleven hundred thousand souls, or about seven in a thousand.

The degree in which instruction is imparted in the different departments is ascertained by the examination as to their intellectual condition, of the men drawn to fill the ranks of the army, and who, as they are taken indiscriminately from all classes, may be supposed to exhibit very fairly the degree in which instruction is imparted throughout the departments.

According to this test, it appears that the proportion of the people who can read and write in the four *most* instructed departments is nearly three-fourths, while in the four *least* instructed it is little more than one-eighth. The exact proportions are—

Most instructed—

1. Meuse	71 in 100
2. Doubs	73
3. Jura	73
4. Haute Marne.....	72

Least instructed—

83. Cher	13
84. Haute Vienne	13

85. Allier..... 13 in 100
 86. Corrèze 12 .. .

The proportion for the whole of France being 38 in 100.

It occurred that in 1831, which was the year taken by M. Guerry for examination, there were charged with offences in the four *most* instructed departments, 232 persons, and in the four *least* instructed, only 187 persons. But if the five years for which the returns are given are included in the examination, there will be found a wholly different result: and, indeed, it will be seen that 1831 is the only year of the series in which the excess of criminals is not ranged on the side of the least instructed departments.

MOST INSTRUCTED DEPARTMENTS.					LEAST INSTRUCTED DEPARTMENTS.			
MEUSE, JURA, DOUBS, HAUTE MARNE.					CHER, HAUTE VIENNE, ALLIER, CORREZE.			
Years.	Crimes against persons.	Crimes against prop- erty.	Total No. of Crimi- nals.	Number upon whom sentence of death, and of forced labour for life, and for terms of years was passed.	Crimes against persons.	Crimes against prop- erty.	Total No. of Crimi- nals.	Number upon whom sentence of death, and of forced labour for life, and for terms of years was passed.
1829	43	119	162	26	61	135	196	35
1830	61	146	207	38	92	137	229	50
1831	51	181	232	43	38	149	187	40
1832	37	119	156	28	85	132	217	41
1833	35	115	150	40	52	109	161	42
	227	680	907	175	328	662	990	206
Yearly aver- age.	45	136	181	35	66	132	198	41.6

The annual average number of criminals in the five years is nearly ten per cent. greater in the least instructed than it is in the most instructed Departments; but the superiority of the latter will be more striking if we observe the numbers charged with offences against the person, and those charged with depredations against property. The first being the more peculiar sign of barbarism, the Author observed that we must expect to find the greater number of such offenders among the most ignorant, and accordingly the annual average number is, in the four darkest Departments, 66, while in the most enlightened it is only 45, or in

the proportion of about two to three. As crimes against property may be considered among the consequences of civilisation, it is not surprising to find that this class of criminals is greatest where instruction, and its concomitant civilisation, are most expanded. This is the case as shewn by the Tables under examination, but in a much smaller degree than might be expected, the annual average excess of offenders against Property in the four most instructed Departments being only four in 132, or about three per cent.

The Author then proceeded to observe that, if the object were simply to shew that by taking the particular year which he has adopted, M. Guerry has fallen upon a wrong conclusion, and that instruction, even in the unsatisfactory degree wherein it is now imparted to the mass, is not justly chargeable with the bad effect which he has attached to it, what has already been said would perhaps be sufficient. But the subject is one of such vital importance to the well-being and moral progress of Society, that he considered it would be wrong to pass by an opportunity for giving it a still further examination, and for this purpose he thought it preferable to analyse the most unfavourable year of the series.

It having been already shown that in the year 1831, the number of criminals in the four *most* instructed Departments was 232, while in the *least* instructed it was only 187 (making a difference in favour of the latter of 24 per cent.), the fact would seem to bear out the unfavourable conclusions of M. Guerry. It will at once be seen, however, that such conclusion, to be justly founded, must proceed upon the additional circumstance of the offenders being found among the instructed classes. On examining how far this is in accordance with the facts as disclosed in the French official Tables, it appears that in those documents, the state as regards instruction, of the parties accused, is exhibited under four distinct heads—viz.

- 1st. Those who can neither read nor write.
- 2nd. Those who can read or write imperfectly.
- 3rd. Those who can read and write well.

4th. Those who have received instruction beyond the acquirement of mere reading and writing.

By separating the criminals of the eight Departments under consideration, according to this classification, the Author found that in the year 1831 they were divided as follows :—

	Four most Instructed Departments.	Four least Instructed Departments.
1st Class. Those wholly uninstructed	101	158
2nd Class. Those who read & write imperfectly	103	12
3rd Class. Those who read and write well	24	13
4th Class. Those still further educated	4	4
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	232	187
	<hr/>	<hr/>

We have seen that in the more enlightened Departments, the proportion of persons who can read and write is, 73 in 100, while in the least instructed it is no more than 13 in 100. The population of the first being 1,142,454, it follows that only 308,463 persons are wholly uninstructed, and the number of offenders in this class being 101, it further follows that one person in 3,054 among them, has been brought before the tribunals, whereas among the three instructed classes, the offenders are 131 among 833,991 instructed persons, or only one in 6,366.

In the least instructed Departments a similar examination gives the following result. The population being 1,134,280, of whom only 13 in 100 are instructed, there will be 986,824 wholly ignorant, and 147,456 who can read or write. The number of wholly ignorant offenders being 158, gives in that class only one offender in 6,245 persons, whereas the instructed classes amounting in number to 147,456, include 29 offenders, or one in every 5,084 individuals.

The Author considered that it was not difficult to account for these results. In situations where education is pretty generally imparted, the wholly ignorant will find themselves at a disadvantage through the greater proportion of employments being occupied by those who are instructed ; the ignorant man is

therefore more impelled to lawless courses than in other situations where the great bulk of the people, being equally instructed, all have a nearly equal chance of obtaining honest employments.

If a similar examination be made for the two following years 1832 and 1833, beyond which the statements do not reach, the result will be similar.

In the more enlightened Departments the offenders who had not received instruction, bore to the uninstructed portion of the inhabitants, the proportion of

1 in 4,745 in 1832
1 in 5,318 in 1833 ;

the proportion having been 1 in 3,054 in 1831, shewing a great and progressive improvement.

Of the instructed, the proportion of offenders

which in 1831 had been 1 in 6,366
was in 1832 1 in 9,161
and in 1833 1 in 9,065

In the least instructed Departments, the proportion of uninstructed offenders was

in 1831 one in 6,245
in 1832 5,422
in 1833 7,709

Of offenders who had received instruction the proportions were

in 1831 one in 5,084
in 1832 4,213
in 1833 4,468

By means of its effective system of police, and through the necessity which it imposes upon every person passing from one department of the kingdom to another, to provide himself with a passport, the French government is enabled to trace the progress of its individual subjects, and to ascertain with great accuracy

their previous conduct. Taking advantage of this state of things, the Minister of Justice has, during the last few years, included in his annual statements, returns of relapsed criminals (*récidives*) thus giving a tolerable good account of the extent to which dishonest and violent courses are carried on as a profession in France.

The following abstract from these returns bears so strongly and so interestingly upon the subject under examination, that the Author considered no apology was necessary for its insertion.

The total number of relapsed criminals, (in this country they would be termed professional offenders) who were brought before the courts of Assize in France in the years 1831, 1832, and 1833 were 1296, 1429, and 1318 respectively.

Separating these into classes according to their degree of instruction, the numbers are as follow :—

Years.	Wholly Ignorant.			Read or write badly.			Read and write well.			Superior instruction.		
	Accused.	Acquitted.	Convicted.	Accused.	Acquitted.	Convicted.	Accused.	Acquitted.	Convicted.	Accused.	Acquitted.	Convicted.
1831	799	176	623	311	92	249	130	51	79	26	12	14
1832	857	173	684	422	95	327	131	40	91	19	7	12
1833	782	159	623	395	85	310	119	28	91	22	3	19
Yearly Average.	813	169	644	386	91	295	127	40	87	22	7	15

In conclusion, the Author observed that it was much to be regretted that in the examination of the conscripts in the different departments of France, already alluded to, not any distinction has been made with regard to the degree of instruction which each individual has received.

The persons drawn are divided simply into two classes—those who have received instruction, and those from whom it has been altogether withheld. Had the same course been followed as that which has been adopted for the classification in this respect, of offenders, the result of the inquiry might have thrown a most important light upon one of the most interesting moral questions that can engage the attention of society. At present all that can be learned from the inquiry made under the authority of the Minister of War, is comprehended in the fact, that 62 out of every 100 persons within the ages liable to military service, are wholly uninstructed: how many of the remaining 38 belong respectively to each of the three remaining classes, viz., those who read and write imperfectly—those who read and write well, and those who have received a superior degree of instruction, there are no means for ascertaining.

It being obvious that the slight degree of instruction imparted to the first of these three classes has but little, if any, efficacy in restraining from immoral courses, the whole question at issue depends on the moral effect produced on the mind by that degree of careful culture which is alone deserving of the name of education, and which teaches men to respect the rights of others by imbuing them with sound moral and religious principles.

In the absence of such information as that to which allusion has here been made, the Author considered that the following table might yet be interesting, and afford gratification to those who believe that by communicating a course of moral education to the great bulk of the community, a vast proportion of the vice and misery now witnessed may be driven from society.

It will be seen, from an inspection of this table, that out of 4,222 criminals subjected to punishment in France, in 1833, the large proportion of 3,777 belonged to the classes either wholly without, or who had received only the lowest degree of instruction. Of the two remaining classes 345 offenders were furnished from among those who can read and write well, and 100 from among those superiorly educated.

The Author further observed that it was impossible to conceive that these proportions could be in agreement with the state of education throughout the population of France, one of the most enlightened countries in the world; and if they be not so in agreement, that it was equally impossible to resist the conviction, that education, even as it has hitherto been conducted, acts with a restraining power upon the evil passions and propensities of man.

Lastly, if the subjoined table is examined further, it will be seen that out of 50 persons sentenced to death, not one belonged to the well-educated class; that of the 100 persons convicted in that class 47 were subjected to only slight correctional punishments, and four to simple *surveillance*; thus leaving no more than 49 well-educated persons out of the whole population of more than 32,000,000—or one in 664,678 persons, who, in the course of the year 1833, were considered deserving of punishments in any degree severe.

PUNISHMENTS.	Cannot read or write.	Read and write imperfectly.	Read and write well.	Superior degree of instruction.	Total.
DEATH	34	10	6	—	50
PERPETUAL LABOUR	90	44	4	3	141
LABOUR FOR DIFFERENT PERIODS . .	483	235	67	17	802
SOLITARY CONFINEMENT	437	213	64	23	737
TRANSPORTATION	1	—	—	3	4
IMPRISONMENT	13	4	1	3	21
CORRECTIONAL PUNISHMENTS . . .	1544	628	198	47	2417
CHILDREN DETAINED	16	7	2	—	25
<i>Surveillance</i>	10	8	3	4	25
	2628	1149	315	100	4222
	3777				
	89.4 per Ct.		8.2 per Ct.	2.4 per Ct.	100 per Ct.